

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

September 22, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary  
United States Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We write to express our concern over the continued proliferation of Huawei's cloud services and to seek information regarding the Biden administration's strategy to stop Huawei Cloud's spread.

Today, Huawei has at least 70 cloud service agreements with foreign governments or state-backed enterprises.<sup>1</sup> These projects span more than 40 nations on almost every continent.<sup>2,3</sup> They include projects in countries of immense geopolitical importance to the United States, such as, Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Huawei's cloud services revenues reportedly rose by almost 170 percent in 2020.<sup>5</sup> This accelerating revenue stream threatens to undermine U.S. efforts to curtail Huawei's power, influence, and financial strength.

The international threat to data security and integrity posed by Huawei extends far beyond 5G. To cite just one example, China reportedly spied on the African Union (AU) headquarters using Huawei-made cameras that China installed when it built the building in 2012.<sup>6</sup> Huawei also installed the AU headquarters' information and computer systems.<sup>7</sup> In 2018, it was revealed that China had built backdoors into these systems, which it used to send sensitive information to Shanghai.<sup>8</sup> If allowed to proliferate, Huawei's cloud services could give the Chinese Communist

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<sup>1</sup> Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, "Huawei's Cloud Services Find Government Buyers Despite Growing Suspensions," *Axios*, May 18, 2021, <https://www.yahoo.com/news/huaweis-cloud-services-government-buyers-152953202.html>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Reconnecting Asia Project, "CSIS Huawei Cloud & e-Government Data April 2021", Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), April 2021, <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1N8MCQcKkGe7ezQT3L6kNmYI4U9G3iFr4MePDSF40co4/edit#gid=1674818224>.

<sup>4</sup> Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, "Huawei's Cloud Services Find Government Buyers Despite Growing Suspensions," *Axios*, May 18, 2021, <https://www.yahoo.com/news/huaweis-cloud-services-government-buyers-152953202.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Zhang Erchi, Timmy, Shen, "Huawei Deactivates AI and Cloud Business Group in Restructuring," *Caixin*, April 7, 2021, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Caixin/Huawei-deactivates-AI-and-cloud-business-group-in-restructuring>.

<sup>6</sup> Raphael Satter, "Exclusive-Suspected Chinese Hackers Stole Camera Footage from African Union – memo," *Reuters*, December 16, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-african-union-cyber-exclusiv/exclusive-suspected-chinese-hackers-stole-camera-footage-from-african-union-memo-idINKBN28Q1DB?edition-redirect=in>.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Shoebridge, "Chinese Cyber Espionage and the National Security Risks Huawei Poses to 5G Networks," *Macdonald-Laurier Institute*, November, 2018, [https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/files/pdf/MLICommentary\\_Nov2018\\_Shoebridge\\_Fweb.pdf](https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/files/pdf/MLICommentary_Nov2018_Shoebridge_Fweb.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Ghali Kadiri, "In Addis Ababa, the African Union headquarters is spied on by Beijing," *La Monde*, January 26, 2018, [https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/01/26/a-addis-abcba-le-siege-de-l-union-africaine-espionne-par-les-chinois\\_5247521\\_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/01/26/a-addis-abcba-le-siege-de-l-union-africaine-espionne-par-les-chinois_5247521_3212.html).



Party (CCP) similar access to additional governments, companies, and other important institutions, delivering Beijing a distinct information advantage.

Huawei Cloud's e-Government services promise to help countries streamline document digitization, tax services, national ID systems, elections, and more.<sup>9</sup> However, they also expose Huawei's clients to the prying eyes of the CCP. When Huawei's client is a private firm, every one of its customers is at risk. When Huawei's client is a country, its entire population and political structure sits in the crosshairs.

Huawei's cloud services present an obvious danger to U.S. firms and citizens. This threat could manifest itself in the CCP's access to the personal data of visiting U.S. citizens, services members, businesspersons, and diplomats. Such an outcome could severely disadvantage U.S. diplomatic, intelligence, and economic efforts and must be resisted accordingly.

During the previous administration, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Undersecretary of State Keith Krach launched the "Clean Network" program to address the long-term threat malign authoritarian actors pose to data privacy, security, and human rights in the free world.<sup>10</sup> Rooted in internationally accepted digital-trust standards and democratic values, it was expected to be an enduring effort involving a coalition of trusted partners.<sup>11</sup>

This approach includes the Clean Cloud initiative, which aims to prevent U.S. citizens' sensitive personal information and U.S. business' intellectual property from being stored or processed on cloud-based systems accessible to foreign adversaries.<sup>12</sup> Since last May, 60 countries—representing over 66% of the world's GDP—200 telecoms companies, and a host of other industry-leading companies have joined the Clean Network.<sup>13</sup> The Clean Network's progress and all of its associated lines of effort must continue.<sup>14</sup>

Given the national security threat posed by Huawei cloud services, we seek detailed answers to the below questions:

1. What actions is the Biden administration currently taking to stop the continued proliferation of Huawei cloud services?
2. Does the Biden administration plan to continue the Clean Network, including the Clean Cloud initiative? If not, why not? What—if anything—will replace it?
3. To what extent has the Biden administration engaged governments that have signed Huawei cloud service contracts to discuss the threats posed by their decisions?

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<sup>9</sup> Jonathan E. Hillman and Maesea McCalpin, "Huawei's Global Cloud Strategy," Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 17, 2021, <https://reconasia.csis.org/huawei-global-cloud-strategy/>.

<sup>10</sup> Meg Rithmire and Courtney Han, "The Clean Network and the Future of Global Technological Competition," Harvard Business School Case Study, April 14, 2021, <https://www.slideshare.net/secret/vm8cA4T1nfWRZi>.

<sup>11</sup> US Department of State, "The Clean Network," August 2020, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/the-clean-network/index.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. n. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Under Secretary Keith Krach, "Under Secretary Keith Krach Remarks on U.S.-Eswatini Clean Network Declaration," U.S. Department of State, Press Statement, January 15, 2021. <https://2017-2021.state.gov/under-secretary-keith-krach-remarks-on-u-s-eswatini-clean-network-declaration/index.html>.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Mink, "The Clean Network's Momentum and Secret Sauce," Life & News, December 3, 2020. <https://www.lifeandnews.com/articles/the-clean-networks-momentum-and-secret-sauce/>.



4. Is the Biden administration actively working to provide other countries with alternative options to Huawei cloud services? If so, what are these alternatives and what is their status?
5. Are any additional resources or authorities needed to successfully prevent the continued proliferation of Huawei cloud services?

We must combat Huawei as a whole and target each of the company's commercial units, including their 5G, cloud services, mobile-phone, and underwater cable businesses. The purpose behind Clean Cloud, Clean Apps, and Clean Cable was to have a broad suite of Clean Network efforts beyond 5G designed to unify and mobilize allies against collaborating with untrusted Beijing-backed firms to advance global information security.<sup>15</sup>

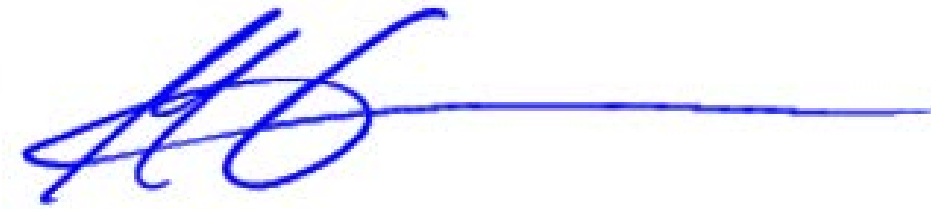
Thank you for considering this important matter. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



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Tom Cotton  
United States Senator



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Mike Gallagher  
Member of Congress

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<sup>15</sup> Roslyn Layton, "State Departments 5G Clean Network Club Gains Members Quickly." Forbes, September 4, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/roslynlayton/2020/09/04/state-departments-5g-clean-network-club-gains-members-quickly/?sh=3376596a7536>.